

issue, where you are, irrespective of what the final outcome here is. I know you believe, most of you, a pretty strong majority, that something does need to be done and that Initiative 300 is probably damaging. As I say, my problem today is convincing that person, with the intensity of emotion expressed in that letter, that Initiative 300 is not the appropriate approach. Now before, before any of us can get anything done on these very intense and emotional issues we have to establish a link or a line of communication. That means at least we start, whether we are on the far right, whether we are on the far left, we start by saying, okay, I'm willing to listen, I'm willing to say if you can really show me something, maybe I'll come off my point. So I, for one, commit if you can demonstrate to me, absolutely demonstrate, the value of Initiative 300, or some variation, then I'm willing, I'm willing to come off. I think that is the essence, the essence of government, the essence of statesmanship and ultimately compromise is the centerpiece of all of government. So if there is a middle ground, I'm willing to help find it. But I cannot do that unless that same reciprocity of understanding exists on the other side. I think the next step is we identify exactly what the perceived problem is, and I'll give my statement of the problem and you see if you disagree or agree, whether you are on this side or that. Many farmers, almost everybody in agriculture, is hurting. They see their entire life's savings, their inheritance in some cases, their families, their way of life, their property at risk, being lost. They see themselves being removed from the farm. The other half of that equation is Initiative 300 is perceived by the people as the thing that is going to save them, the thing that is going to somehow save "the family farm." That is why it is called the family farm preservation act, I presume. I see Senator Higgins here. Did you have something, Senator Higgins?

SENATOR HIGGINS: No, Senator. I just wanted you to know that I was going to wait until you got through with your debate before I came up and cast my vote. But since you mentioned the gubernatorial candidates were not here, I want you to know I am here. I have been here, I just didn't want to listen to all of this.

SPEAKER NICHOL: I'm sorry, just a minute, just a minute, just a minute.